

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

DISCWORLD®

ROLEPLAYING GAME



BY TERRY PRATCHETT AND PHIL MASTERS
ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL KIDBY AND SEAN MURRAY

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

The World Is Round . . .

And Also Flat!

It's obvious really. Everyone¹ knows it.

The Disc rests on the back of four giant elephants, who in turn stand on the back of Great A'Tuin, the only turtle to form the basis of an entire branch of astrophysics.

For many years, events on the Discworld® have been chronicled in the works of Terry Pratchett. Fans have enjoyed the adventures of Rincewind the incompetent wizard, Granny Weatherwax (known to trolls as “She Who Must Be Avoided”), Commander Sam Vimes, Susan Sto Helit (granddaughter of Death), Moist von Lipwig, and a cast of other strange and unique characters.

Now, with the aid of this *completely revised* and *updated* edition of the *Discworld® Roleplaying Game* (with special thanks to Mr Moist von Lipwig for his assistance with all the restructuring), roleplayers can once again venture to the far end of the probability curve and . . .

- ✿ **THRILL** to the distinctive sights, sounds, and smells (especially smells) of Ankh-Morpork, most dubious city in the multiverse!
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- ✿ **INTERVENE** in the cultural interactions of trolls and dwarves (watch out for flying axes)!
- ✿ **AVOID** the attentions of Death, Fate, the Lady, and the Patrician!
- ✿ **CAMPAIGN** for goblin rights!
- ✿ **WONDER** why they bought a second meat pie from Mr Dibbler!
- ✿ **RUN AWAY** from an angry Swamp Dragon (two feet of mindless fury and high-explosive digestion)!
- ✿ **LEARN** why the second-greatest lover on the Disc needs a stepladder.

Complete with a brand-new Discworld® magic system, Things from the Dungeon Dimensions, Gaspode the Wonder Dog, and a Thousand Elephants. (Well, maybe we exaggerated a bit about the elephants.)

¹ Except the devout followers of the Great God Om, who firmly believe it's a sphere.



The Discworld® Created by Terry Pratchett
GURPS Game Adaptation by Phil Masters
Additional Material by John M. Ford and Terry Pratchett
Edited by Sean Punch Cover Art by Paul Kidby
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GURPS

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DISCWORLD

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Adventures on the Back of the Turtle

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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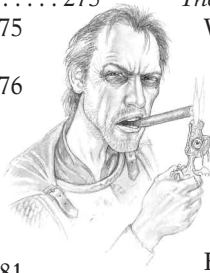
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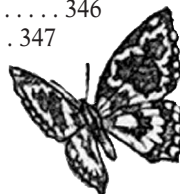
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INTRODUCTION

Somewhere . . .

There is a flat, circular world which rests on the backs of four elephants, which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle, which swims through space. Magic works here. Well, most of the time. Some of the time, anyway. There are gods and heroes.

It is a fantasy world, albeit with odd similarities to our own, and a setting for fantasy stories. Some of these stories have been told over the last quarter-century or so in a series of novels – and the occasional short story, novella, and so on – by Terry Pratchett. (For convenience, this body of stories is hereafter referred to as *the chronicles*.) The *Discworld Roleplaying Game* enables you to create Discworld stories of your own, in the form of games, with the collaboration of your friends.

The Discworld is a comedy setting, but with room for occasional bits of tragic relief. Hence, this book is about running comedy games, and getting the atmosphere right. But these stories are also about people, and stories told and games played in this setting can be as complex and character-driven as any you could set anywhere else.

So dive in. Don't eat the meat pies, don't frighten the swamp dragons, and be careful how you refer to the Librarian.

What Is a Roleplaying Game?

As some Discworld fans who buy this book may not know much about these “roleplaying game” things, a word of explanation is in order.

Non-computer roleplaying games (RPGs) – sometimes called “tabletop” or “pencil-and-paper” RPGs – go back to the 1970s, preceding the Discworld by just a few years. They've sometimes been described as “collaborative improvised radio drama”; a group of people get together, take the parts of characters, and create a story by describing what happens and what those characters do in response to events. But it's just as accurate (somewhat, but not very) to compare them to computer games, including “first-person shooters” and, yes, “roleplaying games”; the game provides an environment, in which each player operates one character, usually an adventurous sort, who can go through the game world, exploring or fighting or trading or talking to other characters. Apart from anything else, unlike radio dramas but like computer games, tabletop RPGs have rules and systems to determine whether the characters succeed or fail in their actions.

An important way in which RPGs differ from either of those other things, though, is in the presence of a Game Master (GM). Like the designer of a computer game, the GM defines settings, creates situations to which the player characters (PCs) must respond, and manages the use of the rules. Unlike a computer-game designer, however, the GM is present in person; among other things, he gets to play all the non-player characters (NPCs), giving them dialogue and personality. He's a bit like the director of that radio drama, except that he plays characters – often *many* characters – and he doesn't have the right to *tell* anyone else what to do, although he does make rules decisions and subtly steer events to keep the story interesting.

And that's why tabletop RPGs are so exciting. As there are humans on both sides of things, every character can have personality and individual mannerisms. Since the GM has the freedom to make decisions and improvise, the PCs can go off track or try unexpected tricks – but because there are rules and systems, things are fair, and the PCs' successes have the taste of real victories. You can fight monsters if you want, and those fights can be as exciting as in any computer game or radio play, but you can also talk, trade, or sneak around, and that's just as important as fighting, if you want it to be.

“How can you hope to win without sacrificing the occasional pawn?”

*“Oh, I never play to win.”
She smiled. “But I do play not to lose.”*

*– Fate and the Lady,
in Interesting Times*



ROLEPLAYING ON THE DISC

The *Discworld Roleplaying Game* does what it says; it enables you to play an RPG with the Disc as its game world. Over the decades and dozens of novels, the Disc has developed into a huge and detailed setting – an ideal location for roleplaying. (Actually, it's a whole *collection* of settings, from the scholar-pirate nation of Krull to the jungle kingdoms of Howondaland, the snows of the Ramtops, the swamps of Genua, the ancient Agatean Empire, and the Fourecksian Outback.) At the same time, the legion of readers who've enjoyed the chronicles provide a ready-made supply of players who are familiar with the world, and who therefore won't need many explanations before they start – although it's perfectly possible to play here without having read any of the stories, and indeed to treat a game as your introduction to the Disc.

The only snag with this is that some people may feel intimidated by the idea of creating their own stories in a setting with so much depth, which people love so much. Please don't! The Disc is meant to be a place for readers to enjoy, where stories happen. The entire point of this book is to help you have fun making up your own.

THE GURPS RULES

This game uses a set of rules based on the current (fourth) edition of *GURPS*, the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System*, from Steve Jackson Games. See Chapters 2-5 for these. *GURPS* is versatile and allows you to define characters in enough detail to make them interesting individuals, with real advantages and problems, and unique abilities, skills, and flaws.



There are plenty of other **GURPS** books (starting with the two-volume **Basic Set**, which contains a more comprehensive set of rules), which will be of interest to those who want to get deeper into the system or who desire more detail in particular areas of play. See the Bibliography (pp. 402-403).

WHAT ELSE YOU WILL NEED

To use the rules, you'll need at least three ordinary six-sided dice, pencils, and scratch paper. You may want to run off a few photocopies of the blank character sheet on p. 24 (you have our permission to do so for your personal use) – at least one copy per player – or download a similar sheet from the Steve Jackson Games website and print copies of that. Other Discworld-related books are of course strongly recommended; again, see the Bibliography (pp. 402-403).

This Book

The first chapter of the **Discworld Roleplaying Game** is a basic introduction to the Discworld, for the benefit of gamers who don't know the setting well and anyone who wants a refresher. Chapters 2-5 are about the *game* part, providing most of the rules. The next five chapters explore the setting in greater detail, with

reference to those game mechanics; they cover society, nonhuman races, geography, the supernatural side, major characters from the chronicles, and animals. Chapter 11 puts everything together, discussing how to run games set on the Disc, and illustrating this with a number of example settings and adventures. The book wraps up with a bibliography.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

The original **Discworld Roleplaying Game** was released in 1998, initially under the title **GURPS Discworld**, and was followed in 2001 by a companion volume, **GURPS Discworld Also**. The book in your hands is the second edition, which combines content from both of those earlier works, adds material from the latest novels, updates the rules to the most recent version of **GURPS**, and includes a new magic system. All of which should answer the question of *why* there's a new edition – the Discworld doesn't stand still, and neither do we.

This book refers to all of the “adult” Discworld novels published up to the time of writing, plus a few short stories and such. For practical and stylistic reasons, though, it doesn't encompass any of the “younger readers” books set on the Disc.

Some Warnings

Spoiler Alert: We don't set out to spoil anyone's pleasure in the chronicles, or to give away the plots gratuitously. We'd rather that you read and enjoyed everything. However, it's impossible to talk about the current state of the Disc without mentioning how things got that way and how important events turned out. In other words, reading this book from cover to cover means you're in for fewer surprises if you read the novels later.

What It's Not: This book isn't an attempt to retell the entire history of the Discworld, or even the entire history-so-far of the chronicles. It merely attempts to give a feel for most parts of the Disc, with some interesting specifics.

About the Authors

Phil Masters has been roleplaying and writing for RPGs for more than three-fifths of his life, which is a thought he finds . . . very strange. He is the author, co-author, or compiler of several books for **GURPS** and other RPGs (including **Champions**, **Ars Magica**, and **Eclipse Phase**), and is line editor for the **Transhuman Space** hard-SF, near-future **GURPS** sub-line. He lives in England with a wife who is smarter than him and a computer which he still suspects of ambition.

Terry Pratchett, it turns out, wrote his first RPG scenario when Phil Masters was still running around the playground. It had a toilet in it. It also had an intelligent box called The Luggage, which walked around on legs. Some ten years later, when he had the idea of writing a fantasy novel that'd be an antidote to too many bad fantasy books, he remembered it . . .

Since then, the Discworld series has sold about 85 million copies (but who's counting?) in 38 languages worldwide, the books have achieved bestseller status in the U.K. and U.S. mainstream lists. *Sir Terry* was knighted for services to literature by Queen Elizabeth II. His numerous awards include a Carnegie Medal, Locus Awards, and an Andre Norton Award, while his documentaries have garnered a Grierson Award, several BAFTAs, and an International Emmy.

(More) About **GURPS**

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. **GURPS** continues to grow – see what's new at gurps.sjgames.com.

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers **GURPS** adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to warehouse23.com.

Pyramid (pyramid.sjgames.com). Our monthly PDF magazine includes new rules and articles for **GURPS**, systemless locations, adventures, and much more. Look for each themed issue from Warehouse 23!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The web page for the **Discworld Roleplaying Game** can be found at gurps.sjgames.com/discworld.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.



Why a Disc? Why the Turtle?

The Discworld, which looks like an extraordinarily improbable object (at least until one examines some terrestrial concepts of cosmic structure), can exist because it occupies a region of Highly Stressed Reality. There can be wizards, trolls, and dragons because the physical constraints that prevent them in other parts of the multiverse are relaxed – in fact, downright limp. There are still rules of existence, but they're permissive, not exclusive.

Or, to put it another way, the Disc is the handiwork of a Creator working to a specification that was more poetic than usual.

Either way, it exists at the far end of the probability curve. It is consistent, in its way, but not *likely*. Furthermore, this

improbability – and the laws of narrative causality which have real force here – are important to more than just its origins. They pervade life on the Disc.

The Power of Story

Part of what enables the Discworld to exist as it does is the power of narrative. Stories have *serious* clout in a universe like this. A flat world carried on top of four elephants may be unlikely, but it makes a good story. Part of the fundamental structure of the Disc's universe is a material – or particle, or something – called *narrativium*, which holds the whole thing together. The effects propagate down to the level where it's hard for a royal family to produce three sons without the lads being bound to go off on adventures at some point, the youngest achieving the most impressive results.

This is known to scholars and philosophers on the Disc, is a part of the local system of magic, and can be manipulated. Indeed, there are people on the Discworld who've built lengthy careers on the power of their personal story. But this isn't always a safe or easy thing to do. Stories can turn round and get nasty if you're not very careful – and you have to make sure that you're playing the right part in the right story.

METAPHOR AND BELIEF

Metaphors, too, tend not to sit like Patience on a monument smiling at grief, but to get off the monument, hunt Grief down, and demand to know why he done her wrong and how about the maintenance payments? Death is not an abstract concept represented by a robed skeleton with a scythe; he *is* a robed skeleton with a scythe.

Belief has powerful effects. Discworld gods are created – or at least empowered and maintained in their power – by their followers' collective belief. Wizards and witches draw power as much from other people believing in their abilities as from their command of magical energy. (After all, convince enough people that you can turn them into frogs with a hard stare, and you may never have to prove it.) Conversely, disbelief can prevent something from existing, or from being seen even if it does exist.

A side-effect of this tendency towards personification is the recurrent and sometimes tiresome literal-mindedness of the Disc's inhabitants. People take metaphors literally because metaphors all too often become literal. Talk about your true love as a rose, and people are likely to point out that she (a) isn't green and red, (b) doesn't have thorns, and (c) walks about a lot. Poets, like engineers, can have a tough time of it on the Disc – and indeed have been severely controlled by law on occasion. On the Disc, "poetic licence" isn't metaphor, either.

NARRATIVE CAUSALITY

Narrative causality is the fundamental power of stories. People want and need events to follow certain courses and come to proper resolutions. A war is supposed to end with the "right" side winning and the "wrong" side having learned its lesson forever. The fact that in the extremely long history of warfare this has hardly ever happened doesn't alter the fact that people want it to happen and resolutely believe, at the start of each new war, that it'll happen again. And on the Disc, there's a chance that it *will* happen – but the power of that story must battle human nature and the personal stories of the war-leaders.

Great A'Tuin

The Disc is borne through space on the back of a world-turtle, of the species *Chelys galactica*. This *is* a species, not a unique specimen; a cluster of eight baby turtles, each bearing four elephant-calves and a little Discworld in its geological youth, were once observed to hatch from moon-sized eggs that had been left in orbit around a full-sized star. They spent a little time orbiting Great A'Tuin, but have since departed on their own cosmic voyages. It's possible that they're the literal offspring of Great A'Tuin, but the turtle's gender remains unknown, despite heroic research programs.

Great A'Tuin is 10,000 miles long – slightly smaller than the Disc it carries. Its shell is encrusted with methane ice and pocked with meteor impacts; its eyes are like oceans. Wizards have tried for centuries to peek telepathically into its consciousness, and they discovered one thing: it's *slow*. Time is of little importance to a turtle; to a really big turtle, time is *really* unimportant. Its thoughts move like glaciers, although it *does* think, and it seems quite content.

Berilia, Tubul, Great T'Phon, and Jerakeen

Even less is known about the four elephants who stand on Great A'Tuin, and on whose backs the Disc rests. It's even harder to get a look at them – they're well under the rim. They are not completely static, however. The Disc's sun and moon trace complex orbits, ensuring phases for the moon and seasons for the Disc, and every now and again, an elephant has to cock a leg to let one of them go past safely.

Nor is it clear how the Disc rotates round its hub, or how the elephants avoid chafing. There is some evidence that the direction of rotation changes at geological intervals, which may be part of the arrangement to avoid such problems.

Incidentally, the Disc's moon seems to generate its own light. It *appears* like our world's moon, waxing and waning regularly, whereas a lunar cycle generated by the Disc's sun's motion coupled with the local physics of light would be too complex to contemplate.



Supernatural Personifications as Characters

Some of the protagonists of the chronicles are not only nonhuman, but *very* supernatural. These include actual gods and anthropomorphic personifications (see pp. 291-304). In a campaign with generous starting points, it would be possible to take such beings as PCs – especially if the GM allows use of the full rules in the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Powers*. The small god template (pp. 144-145) could be a useful guide. There are even some weaker entities at the bottom end of the scale, such as Tooth Fairies (p. 303).

Whether this is a *good* idea is a serious question, its answer dependent on the GM's intentions for the game. Small gods, one-off fairies, and other manifestations of the Disc's flaky metaphysics have peculiar concerns and even more peculiar relationships with other beings – and often full-time occupations running cults or maintaining aspects of reality. Unless the campaign is going to be built around the entity's functions, this is probably too much of a distraction. On the other hand, if the campaign *is* all about that metaphysical work, everyone needs to decide what the *other* PCs are going to do. Will they be assistants, priests, or other supernatural beings with compatible duties?

Campaigns about the lives and work of personifications could be interesting and very *different*, but they aren't likely to be simple to run, and the PCs may well be quite complex in game terms. This sort of thing isn't recommended for first-time gamers or GMs.

New Personifications

Newly shaped personifications might be easier than playing something that's been around for millennia. Even on the Disc, though, it takes a great deal of belief and emotion to form a personification. An existing figure may have to be banished or suppressed for enough psychic energy to come free, and any subsequent rebalancing process tends to eliminate the new personifications. Still, some survive – mostly by chance. The last time new personifications were created was in the course of the story of *Hogfather*.

be interested in them.) Notably, goblins believe that some of their own body products – particularly snot, earwax, and nail clippings – are in a sense sacred, and they carefully collect and preserve them in “unggue pots” to be entombed with the goblin after death. Goblins make these containers for themselves, and all seem to possess an uncanny ability to create amazingly beautiful pots from whatever crude materials are to hand. This does them little good, though; no goblin would ever sell an unggue pot, and any found in the hands of other races have likely been stolen, usually after the owner-maker was slaughtered. Still, it's *just* possible that a sympathetic employer could persuade a goblin to apply some of this skill to more mundane work.

Stolen unggue pots may not be safe for humans. In particular, the finest – called “soul of tears,” made by female goblins who've been obliged by brutal necessity to eat their own infants – may have genuine supernatural power. There have been cases where humans who handled such pots found themselves possessed by a goblin spirit and unable to let go of the pot. The only way to save a human in this state from wasting away within a few days is to take him to a goblin community, where the spirit can find release.

Golems

438 points

Golems are supernaturally powered “robots.” They take the form of large, humanoid clay statues, clearly identifiable as pottery at a casual glance (and in fact partly hollow). They're superhumanly strong and surprisingly fast. Burning red lights glow from a golem's eyes – and from its mouth, if and when it speaks. Golems often end up repairing themselves, and most show signs of centuries of patching. A typical golem is about 8' tall (SM +1) and weighs on the order of 350 lbs.

Golems weren't created by magic as such, though there's evidence that some ancient wizards were able to build something similar. They're actually a product of *religion*. They were originally constructed by priests, holy men, or religious scholars who wanted to prove something about the power of words and to get some heavy work done. A given golem isn't empowered directly by any particular god, but by a holy word, written on parchment (its “chem”) and placed inside its hollow skull. Golems are made with hinged tops to their heads to facilitate this.

In any case, the secret of golem creation seems to have been lost to humanity for the last millennium (although some *golems* remember it). Modern priests insist that the creation of things that act like living beings is blasphemous, and ordinary Discworlders tend to agree. It's an open question whether this is a sign of insecurity, based on the fact that golems are much stronger than humans, but even trolls and undead look down on golems. There are *lots* of golems still around, however – more than many people realise. For example, quite a few can be found down drainage shafts, operating pumps continuously, day and night (golems use the rules under *Supernaturally Powered Beings*, p. 92).

Golems are initially bound to obedience by the power that creates them; details vary, but normal golems are absolutely law-abiding, and they were created as servants for their makers and anyone to whom they're lawfully assigned. The only common limitation on a golem's absolute obedience is the requirement that it take time off for some kind of minimal rituals on holy days of the religion which created it. Denied this, it simply stops working. (A golem can't be forced to do anything; neither threats, nor torture, nor actual destruction will make it diverge from its assignment.)

GOBLIN NPCs

A typical rural goblin may have a point in the *spoken* form of the local human (or dwarf) language, plus skills such as Axe/Mace, Camouflage, Climbing, Stealth, and Survival (Woodlands). Goblins' usual behaviours when other races are around involve running, hiding, and sneak thefts. If they must fight, they prefer quick, opportunistic attacks from behind, but may occasionally switch to berserk desperation.

UNGGUE

Traditional goblin “religion” is a reincarnation-based belief system called “Unggue.” (Goblins don't think that any god would



MAGICAL FORM SKILLS

A Magical Form is a “branch” of magic – skill at getting it to do useful things in one of eight different ways. The Forms are listed under *Magical Forms* (pp. 76-77). For examples of what each can do, see *The Forms* (pp. 202-217).

Which Forms you put points into indicates what sort of magic your character does best. This can reflect his personal interests or prejudices, or the nature of his particular style of magic. And this is where the system gets a bit abstract – while no student of magic on the Disc necessarily thinks in terms of these eight Forms, they can be used to represent a whole lot of loosely related things about magic.

Still, remember that *anyone* trained in magic can potentially use *any* Form – though perhaps not reliably. Some people with Magic skill know so little about certain Forms that they honestly don’t believe that they can use them, but that’s a personal error.

MAGIC POINTS

Magic Points (MP) represent the raw thaumaturgical *stuff* that you must use to produce all but the smallest effects. They aren’t exactly “energy,” but they often substitute for it; for example, by pumping more MP into a fireball, you can get it to do more damage. Sometimes, though, MP are less about raw horsepower and more about the degree to which a spell abuses the structure of reality.

It’s possible to pull raw magic out of the ether and put it into a spell as part of the casting process; long-winded ritual magic does this, and that’s sometimes the only way to get really powerful spells to work. However, individuals with Magery automatically accumulate a little raw magic around themselves – or can see and manipulate the raw magic that settles on anyone, which comes to the same thing – and can use it to power quick spells. Non-mages *can’t* do that; they can *only* get magic to work by using long-winded rituals.

To find the maximum number of MP which someone with Magery can carry about with him, add his Will to his Magery level, divide the sum by 3, and round to the nearest whole number. For example, Will 16 and Magery 0 give 5 MP, while Will 9 and Magery 2 give 4 MP.¹

Spending MP

When a magic-worker successfully casts a spell, he usually has to put a number of MP into it. Deduct this cost from his personal total and/or the total in his staff (if any); *Ritual Casting* (p. 200) and some other methods provide alternative MP sources. If the caster lacks sufficient MP, his spell fizzles and fails automatically.

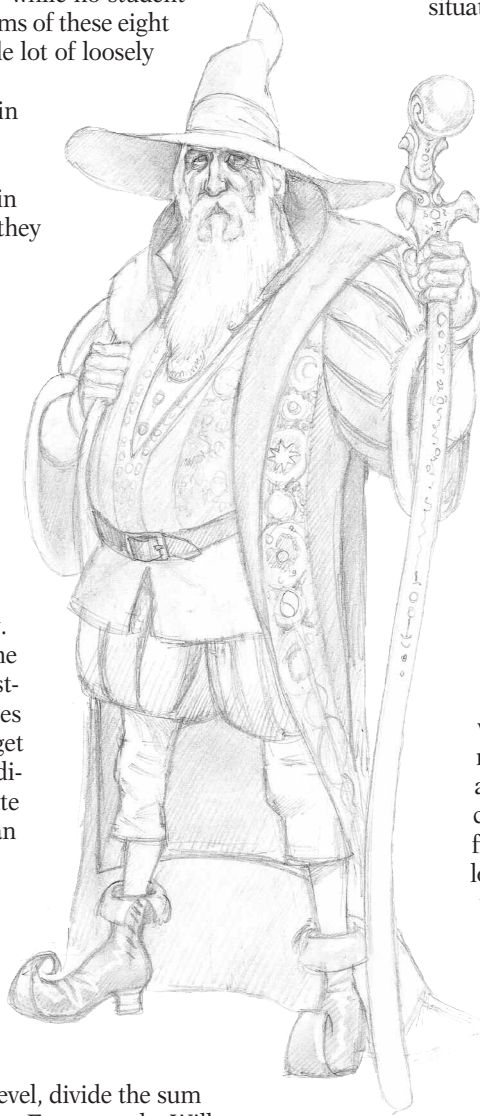
1. For atmospheric purposes, gamers can refer to Magic Points as “thaums” if they wish. It doesn’t really fit the Discworld meaning of the word (p. 270), but never mind. This looks right for wizard characters, less so for witches.

For further details, keep reading – *General Power Rules* (pp. 195-196) and *Casting the Spell* (pp. 198-200) are especially relevant.

Recovering MP

If you have fewer than your maximum number of MP, thanks to having used them to cast spells, you regain them at a rate of 1 MP per 10 minutes. If you’ve used up some of your staff’s MP, these recover at the same rate, *separately* and *simultaneously*.

Neither you nor your staff can recover MP in areas or situations where magic doesn’t work, though.



THE WIZARD’S STAFF

Wizards never regard their personal MP reserve as enough, so they’ve come up with a way to augment it: the magic staff. Every fully qualified wizard has one of these – one is formally presented to each student graduating from Unseen University, and a recognised wizard can take a personal student who has attained graduate level to UU and request that he receive a staff. It acts as a Magic Point “battery.” No wizard can have more than one working staff attuned to him at a time.

A standard staff can hold MP equal to the wizard’s IQ + Magery level; the Superior Staff advantage (p. 47) adds to that. A wizard can tap his staff for MP so long as it’s within two yards of his person and not being held by anybody else. In addition, a spell that requires the wizard to *touch* an opponent or object works just as well if he touches it with his staff. Further, magical telekinesis and similar effects can’t affect a wizard’s staff so long as it’s in physical contact with him. Enemy wizards can fireball the heck out of each other and then loot the body, or even hurl each other around with magical force if they can get a lock-on, but magical disarming doesn’t work.

A wizard PC gets his staff for free, without spending cash, and it has the nice bonus that it also works just fine as a support while taking long meditative walks, and as six foot of bashing weapon. A typical staff is made of oak or ash; sapient pearwood (p. 158) is highly desirable but *rare*. A *very* few wizards in the past had metal staffs, which held eminently adequate charges of energy and were certainly durable, but the magic in those tended to become dangerously corrupt – and anyway, that trick has been lost these days.

Losing Your Staff

A wizard would have to be *extremely* careless to lose his staff by accident – although he might deliberately break his staff, as a way of formally giving up magic (sometimes to get married). However, a staff can sometimes be taken away, or hacked apart by opponents. Striking a staff in combat requires an attack at -3 to hit. The wielder can attempt to dodge or parry, the latter representing deflecting the attack in a way that doesn’t damage the staff. A staff has DR 5 and can sustain 12 HP of damage before break-



BOROGRAVIA

Another breakaway component of the old Dark Empire, Borogravia is an agricultural country with a minor sideline in tall mines. The population is mostly human, with a few trolls and vampires, and wandering clans of Igers. There are also dwarf mines; these closed themselves off for an extended period when the humans took against them for religious reasons, but have since reopened their doors.

Borogravia is noteworthy for only two things: a state religion – now defunct – that tipped from restrictiveness into outright insanity (see *The Story of Nuggan*, pp. 299-300), and a foreign policy that resembled the attitude of an aggressive drunk challenging everyone in the bar. These got Borogravia into increasing trouble over the years, and when the faithful were enjoined to destroy the clacks system, it ended up at war – not only with its neighbours, but also with Ankh-Morpork and Genua. This might well have meant Borogravia falling under the control of the ambitious regional power Zlobenia, except that Ankh-Morpork decided that this would upset the regional balance and gave some quiet support to a few sensible Borogravians who wanted to preserve independence (see *Polly Perks*, pp. 346-347). However, the country is still recovering from its own recent past, and things may remain messy for a while.

Widdershins Regions

Large areas of the Disc widdershins of the Circle Sea and Klatch haven't featured much in the chronicles. Klatchistan, the mountainous borderland on the edge of the continent of Klatch, is doubtless a hotbed of traditional mountain-pass folkways (banditry, feuding, and hawk-eyed sentinels sitting behind rocks). Various lands lie further to rimward, including the substantial coastal land of Muntab. Few details about Muntab have reached the rest of the Disc, other than that its ruler is known as the Pash, but Discworld diplomats are becoming increasingly preoccupied by the Muntab Question.¹

Further round, there's a temperate area of rolling plains and hills. Much of the country is pleasant, in a fairy-tale sort of way – deciduous woodland, punctuated with farming villages. One of the nations is Brindisi, known in Ankh-Morpork as a land of opera singers and pasta.

At the far widdershins limits of this region, the Trollbone, Rammerock, and Blade mountain ranges are *serious* geology. The Trollbones, especially, are as high, sharp, and generally challenging as such things get, save for the foothills of Cori Celesti itself. They're troll, dwarf, and little-bald-enlightened-monk territory.

THE VIEUX RIVER

The Vieux River rises in the mountains of Uberwald but leaves as soon as possible, descending into flatter country and slowing down once it's safe. It becomes a broad and useful waterway, navigated by paddleboats (powered by trolls on treadmills), which in turn provide profitable venues for countless professional gamblers. The Vieux enters the Swamp Sea through a broad and marshy delta, dominated by the city of Genua (below).

GENUA

As the main port on the Vieux delta, Genua is prosperous, if foetid; the climate is usually Hot (see *Temperature Extremes*,

The Dark Empire

The Dark Empire – sometimes referred to as the Evil Empire or simply The Empire – is defunct, but its *consequences* loom large in the Disc's recent history.

It was founded, some hundreds of years before the chronicles' present, by a sinister figure known simply as the Evil Emperor, who was reputed to be some kind of magical adept – though given the way he operated, that might just have been an inevitable rumour. He was certainly the most successful classical dark lord in Disc history, at least in raw geographical terms. At its height, his Empire dominated what are now Borogravia and Mouldavia, as well as large parts of Uberwald. Igers created armies of orcs (p. 119) as soldiers for him. Quite what stopped him from conquering more of the Disc is unclear.

However, it would seem that the Emperor proved mortal in the end – so far as anyone knows, anyway. Frankly, people like that are just too effective as hero magnets, and he may have grown cocky enough not to bother to make provision for his return in a sequel. His Empire lingered into recent times, but considerably reduced in size; Borogravia and Mouldavia broke away long enough ago to have since developed their own political traditions and rivalries. Uberwaldian towns such as Lipwig were part of the Empire in living memory, though, until it finally, messily disintegrated.

All this helps explain why Uberwald and its neighbours remain so politically disorganised and unstable, despite their long history; they're *still* recovering from this collapse. Fortunately, there are competent and broadly ethical operators – including Lady Margolotta (pp. 349-350) and Low King Rhys (p. 349) – working to patch over the results, with Lord Vetinari assisting from a distance. But dead empires have a nasty way of attracting sentimental admirers. Someone with the nerve and resources to go up against the best politicians on the Disc might regard the Dark Empire's power as something worth salvaging.

p. 191) and also humid. Genua – which has been called the Magical Kingdom and the Diamond City – is an independent city-state, with a population whose ancestors came from all over the Disc, and who have the skin tones to prove it. Centuries ago, it was a colony of Ankh-Morpork, but it broke away.

The dominant local style of magic is voodoo. The place's cooking reflects the same eclectic roots; Genuan cooks are generally brilliant, although a wise gourmet doesn't ask about their ingredients.² There are small white buildings around the city's perimeter, large white houses closer in, and at the centre a castle with lots of ice-cream-cone turrets. All this whiteness dazzles against the muted swamp colours.

1. "Where the hell is Muntab?"

2. *This is a swamplands city.*



The Lady Sib

A recent foundation in Morpork, the Lady Sibyl Free Hospital is a charitable institution – sponsored by the Vimes family – which provides free medical care to the city. It's run by Dr. John "Mossy" Lawn, who in game terms has a 5-point Unusual Background, "Klatchian Medical Training," meaning that his medical skills are at TL4 (see *Medical Skills*, p. 77). He enforces the same standards on his staff and may be successfully training some young doctors in exotic ideas such as hygiene.

Ironically, this means that the poor patients who use the "Lady Sib" frequently receive better treatment than wealthy people who employ prestigious traditional doctors. It's quite likely that adventurer PCs will end up there at some point and benefit from this. Unless they genuinely appear to be dying, though, they may well find themselves in a long queue. Also, while the hospital is definitely free, it *is* a charity, and it can always find a use for donations; individuals who look like *successful* adventurers will receive a lot of polite-but-firm hints on this subject before they leave.

Failing to respond appropriately to that is one way to acquire a new negative Reputation in Ankh-Morpork – but making actual trouble at the hospital is *really* stupid. Not only do many of the city's toughest street brawlers receive good treatment there, and want it to remain standing so that they can go back if necessary, but Dr. Lawn is personal physician to the Vimes family. While Lawn has a full set of medical ethics, and he knows the value of discretion after years of work for the Seamstresses' Guild, he isn't required to remain silent about absolutely everything; patients who show up with *interesting* injuries may well be mentioned to the authorities.

The hospital also looks after a few mental illness cases. It has a whole wing dedicated to people who think that they're Lord Vetinari.

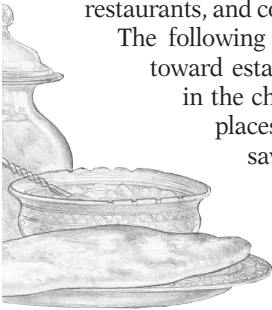
The Strippers' Guild: Strictly, the Guild of Ecdysiasts, Nautchers, Cancanières, and Exponents of Exotic Dance, another all-female guild (although it, too, might well be broad-minded enough to accept male applicants; Ankh-Morpork is an unreconstructed sort of society, but if people are willing to pay for something, nobody much argues). This one even has troll members (who specialise in putting clothes *on* – trolls have some odd ways), but no dwarfs, as the idea of removing clothes is largely outside of dwarf experience. The Guild is run singlehandedly by the legendary Miss Dixie "VaVa" Voom, who retired from the stage a few years ago, possibly after causing one riot or heart attack too many.



Food, Drink, and Lodging

Ankh-Morpork derives a lot of income from visitors. There are a great many rooms-to-let available, a variety of food shops and restaurants, and countless places for a drink and a brawl.¹

The following list just skims the surface and leans toward establishments which feature prominently in the chronicles; e.g., the Drum. Because such places *are* so significant, the GM may want to save them for specific encounters or big moments. Then again, *everyone* in the city-based stories seems to end up drinking at the Drum – usually sooner rather than later.



1. The brawl may be included with the cover price.

The Drum

The Mended Drum, on Filigree Street, is an Ankh-Morpork institution (especially if "institution" is defined to mean "a place with lots of screaming and people with funny ideas about reality"). It's a *well*-established hostelry. It has burned down many times, but somehow, it always gets rebuilt. At times, it has been known as The Broken Drum ("you can't beat it," ho ho), and then renamed after the next fire by a new owner with a quick sense of humour.

The Drum opens directly onto the street; traditionally, the door is guarded by a troll. It backs on the River Ankh. Steps lead down to the main room, which is thick with the smoke of generations, and whose floor is paved with matted rushes and trampled beetles, many of otherwise un-encountered species.



Other Items

The GM who wants to throw *odd* magical items into the game is free to do so – the Disc *does* have a long history of eccentric tinkering. Two examples appear below.

Seven-League Boots

A search round UU's museum will turn up one or two pairs of Seven-League Boots, kept for emergencies and to illustrate to students why high-powered magic isn't always a good idea. The Boots enable the wearer to teleport up to 21 miles with a single step, at a cost of 1 FP. However, this requires careful control; roll against IQ+Magery, at a penalty equal to encumbrance level, for each step (at the GM's option, distractions may give *further* penalties). On a failure, roll vs. DX, again penalised by encumbrance level; success indicates that the wearer

restrains the attempt at the last unstable moment, merely losing the FP, while failure means he succeeds in placing one foot 21 miles ahead of the other without properly controlling the dimension shifts. Anyone observing the latter outcome must make a Fright Check. The wearer himself is very, very dead.

Tiny Salad Bar Bowl of Holding

Invented by a student from UU's Faculty of Thaumic Engineering when an Ankh-Morpork restaurant (briefly) instituted an "All you can get in the bowl for 10 pence" offer, the Bowl of Holding can retain up to three tons in a pocket dimension, without becoming any heavier to carry. However, it only works for lettuce and tomato.

Magic Levels

The Discworld is obviously very magical, but exactly *how* magical varies from place to place. While no regions are entirely lacking in magic – that would be impossible – there are certainly areas where there's more of the stuff. Occasionally, this is raw creative energy, generated by some cosmic power; more often, it's *residual magic* (p. 270). Sometimes it indicates a weakness in the structure of reality – the magic is seeping through – and in other cases it causes such a weakness by abrasion. Either way, the effects are much the same.

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Zones of residual magic vary in area from the county-sized region dominated by the Wyrnberg (pp. 233-234) to small clearings in old-growth forests. There can be no *simple* examples; they all have *personality*, which as anyone who has been sold a crumbling old house by a silver-tongued property dealer can attest, isn't entirely a good thing in a piece of geography. The only sure way to judge their exact extent is by experiment or use of spells or magical instruments, and it's perfectly possible to wander into danger without realising it, but there are often indicators. All such zones should be custom-designed by the GM, with their own quirks, including possible warnings.

The most obvious hints may include a greasy feel to the air and stray sparks of various colours (including octarine) appearing around people's fingernails. These might be obvious to all parties (a *very* strong sign) or only to observers with Magery. Some areas are in perpetual twilight; others are sweltering hot, or freezing cold. Slightly less self-evident, but usually quickly noticeable, are distortions in probability: coins landing on their edges, flying pork (living or cooked), and so on.

Other indicators are the magic's longer-term effects. Natural effects may again be blatant (six-legged rabbits, teleporting ducks, talking trees, and so on), or they might require a successful Naturalist skill roll to spot (such as bushes with the wrong

type of fruit, or birds which sing perfect scales). The GM should be imaginative rather than cruel; apples filled with prussic acid are boring, while apples loaded with lysergic acid are *interesting*. Dangerous zones tend to be plastered with large Keep Out notices, signed by famous senior wizards. Sadly, that may be counterproductive. Senior wizards are terrible at explaining their reasons, leaving younger wizards with a natural, often accurate – but more often fatal – suspicion that the old swine are hogging the good stuff.

Lastly, architectural indicators are the result of humans (or other races) being foolish enough to exploit the effect. The traditional witch's gingerbread cottage needs lots of magic to stay intact. Rather less amusing are Twisted Blasphemous Chthonic Temples dedicated to Unspeakable Beings From Beyond Sanity. Such Beings are most likely to show up in these sorts of areas (needing the magic for sustenance, or the associated weak dimensional barriers for ease of manifestation), and somehow acquire a fan club with a taste for heavy, dank pillars and ample cellar space.

In other words, the GM ought to be creative with such regions, and possibly poetic, but more often creatively destructive. With an increased risk of critical failures to worry about, witches and wizards should learn caution. If their casting skills are too high for this to present a serious problem, the GM can always rule that, as they move deeper into an unstable zone, they must roll against IQ at -5 to stop *any* casting from also generating the equivalent of a critical failure.

Incidentally, in a few *highly* magic-saturated zones, such as the immediate vicinity of Cori Celesti (p. 242), any attempt at working magic is akin to lighting a match in a room full of explosive vapours. The GM should always make sure that at least some members of the party realise this – otherwise, you're just going to kill off the lot of them without warning, which is no fun. If a few of them don't, though, you can have the amusing sight of wizards A and B screaming and dog-piling wizard C when he starts muttering and twiddling his fingers.



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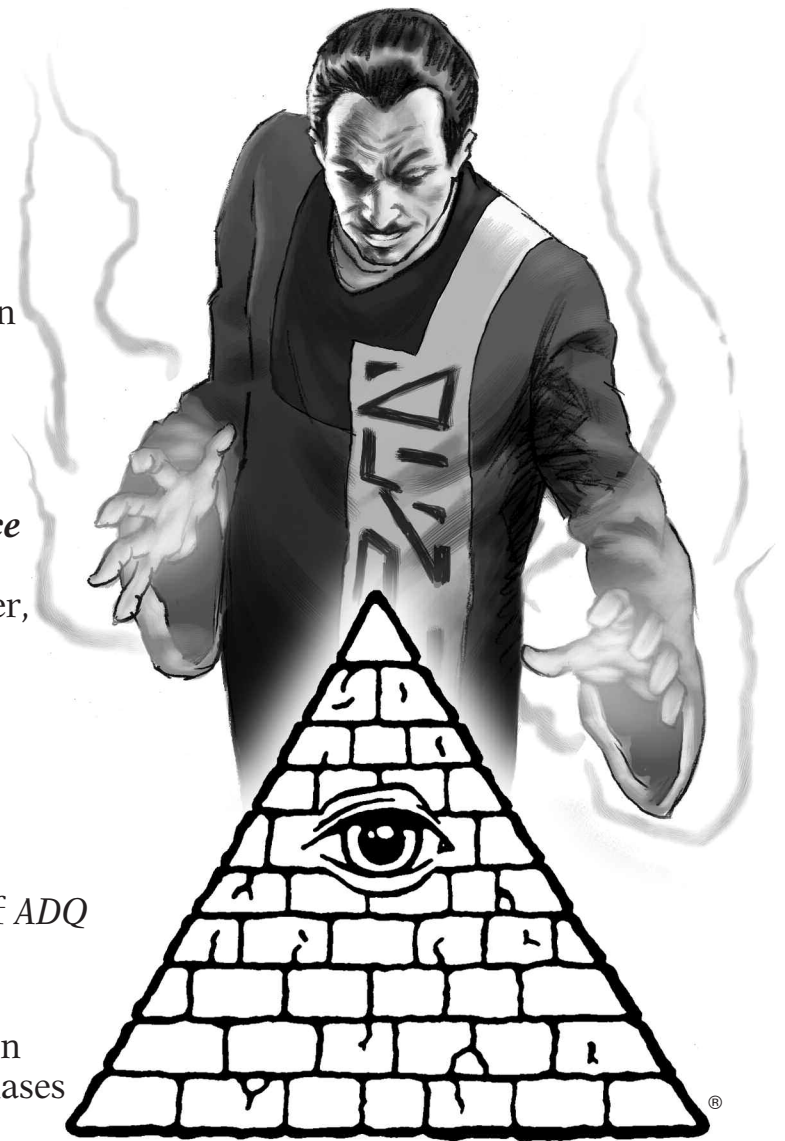
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